

**United Nations Environment Programme
Programme des Nations Unies pour l'environnement
Regional Office for North America (RONA)**



Caption: (Back Row - Left to Right) Wharton Rivers Jr., Ameritech; Larry Babbio, Bell Atlantic; Sol Trujillo, U S WEST; Luc Perrouin, France Telecom; Terrell J. Minger, Center for Resource Management; Ward Dossche, Belgacom; Jan Walsh, British Telecom; Danilo Riva, Telecom Italia; (Middle Row - Left to Right) Adnan Amin, United Nations Environment Programme - Regional Office of North America; Brad Allenby, AT&T; (Front Row - Left to Right); Iqbal Riza, United Nations; Patricia MacKenzie, TELUS; John Carter, BellSouth; Noel Brown, Friends of the United Nations; Pierre Blouin, Bell Canada.

UNEP PRESS RELEASE

**NORTH AMERICAN TELECOM GIANTS TO SIGN
INDUSTRY-WIDE ENVIRONMENTAL CHARTER**

United Nations Headquarters, Monday, 22 February

NEW YORK, 19 February 1999 – CEO's and senior officials from the North American telecommunications industry, world leaders in innovative technologies, will sign an industry-wide environmental charter on Monday evening, 22 February, at United Nations Headquarters in New York. Also expected at this event are representatives from the United Nations, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the Commission on Sustainable Development and senior representatives from several major European telecommunications companies.

The "Environmental Charter for the North American Telecommunications Industry" was developed over a one-year period of time under the guidance of the Colorado-based NGO, Center for Resource Management (CRM), with input from environmental and academic groups, as well as industry representatives. It outlines environmental principles in the areas of management, technology, service and product innovation; facilities and operations; and external relations and communications. North American companies expected to officially endorse the charter on Monday evening include Ameritech, AT&T, Bell Atlantic, Bell Canada, BellSouth, BCT.TELUS and U S WEST.

UNEP views the Charter as an important new model of a voluntary "industry code of conduct." The global environment organization has a long history with the use of voluntary initiatives to improve companies' environmental performance, particularly in the areas of cleaner production, ozone protection and energy efficiency. It is also in line with the initiative, announced two weeks ago in Davos, Switzerland, by Secretary-General Kofi Annan, in which he called on the private sector to take part in the implementation of global values embodied in international agreements, including in the area of environmental and sustainable development.

Joining their American counterparts at this event will be several representatives of major European telecommunications companies: Telecom Italia, Belgacom, France Telecom, as well as the European Public Telecommunications Network Operators' Association, ETNO. ETNO completed an environmental charter for the European telecommunications industry in 1996. Work sessions planned for Monday will provide an opportunity for North American and European telecommunications executives to discuss possible areas of future environmental collaboration.

Also to be considered on Monday is a possible collaboration between the telecom industry and UNEP. This discussion will represent a continuation of talks initiated at UNEP's recent 58-member Governing Council meeting in Nairobi, Kenya on 4 February 1999. A special round-table presentation on telecommunications technology and the environment focused on how telecommunications technology might be used globally to address serious environmental and social problems. Several of the companies to be represented at Monday night's signing ceremony took part in these initial discussions in Nairobi.

Voluntary approaches have been used increasingly in recent years, by both industry and governments, as a policy tool to improve environmental performance. They can range from commitments of individual companies to entire industrial sectors at both the national and international levels. Such initiatives present advantages to both industry and the environment, including greater flexibility in meeting environmental performance targets, incentives to go beyond compliance, opportunity for inter and intra-industry cooperation, and stakeholder involvement in and recognition of industry efforts.

For more information on the signing ceremony, please contact: Pierre Quiblier, UNEP Liaison Officer, tel: (212) 963-8144, fax: (212) 963-7341, E-mail: quiblier@rona.unep.org

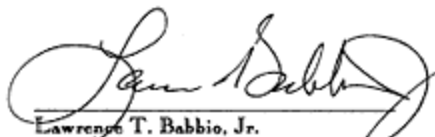
This release can also be viewed at http://www.rona.unep.org/nr_telc.htm


ENVIRONMENTAL CHARTER FOR THE
NORTH AMERICAN TELECOMMUNICATIONS INDUSTRY
INITIAL ENDORSERS

We, the undersigned North American telecommunications companies, do this 22nd day of February, 1999, with our signatures, endorse the principles outlined in the attached "Environmental Charter for the North American Telecommunications Industry."

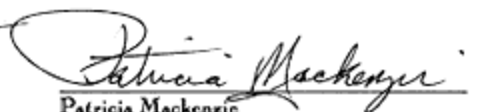

Wharton B. Rivers, Jr.
President - Ameritech Network Services
Ameritech


Braden R. Allenby
Vice President - Environmental Health & Safety
AT&T


Lawrence T. Babbio, Jr.
President & COO
On Behalf of Bell Atlantic and its
Wholly Owned Subsidiaries


Pierre Blouin
Senior Vice President - Sourcing & Logistics
Bell Canada


John H. Carter
Vice President - Environment & Safety
BellSouth Telecommunications, Inc.


Patricia Mackenzie
Assistant VP - Environment, Health & Safety
BCT.TELUS


Solomon D. Trujillo
President & CEO
U S WEST

Attested To By:


Terrell J. Minger, President
Center for Resource Management


Adnan Z. Amin, Regional Director, New York
UNEP